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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997*

Part VI Human rights and humanitarian affairs

Section 23
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

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* The present document contains section 23 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997. The complete proposed programme budget will subsequently be issued in final printed form as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6* (A/50/6/Rev.1).

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Section 23
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Overview

23.1 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949 as a separate entity within the United Nations system; its present mandate is extended until June 1996. By its resolution 3331 B (XXIX) of 17 December 1974, the General Assembly decided that the expenses relating to the emoluments of international staff in the service of UNRWA, which would otherwise have been charged to voluntary contributions, should be provided for under the regular budget of the United Nations with effect from 1 January 1975 for the duration of the Agency's mandate. It has been assumed that the programme will be continued during the biennium 1996-1997.

23.2 With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area and the anticipated extension of self-rule to the rest of the West Bank, UNRWA entered a new era in its relationship with the Palestinian people. In addition to maintaining the services it has provided for over 40 years, the Agency will begin a process of preparing for the eventual hand-over of its installations, services and programmes to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The move of UNRWA headquarters from Vienna to the Gaza Strip is scheduled to take place by the end of 1995.

23.3 The overall strategy for the coming biennium will continue to be to provide needed assistance to the Palestine refugees until the problem can be resolved in accordance with the relevant resolution of the General Assembly. That assistance involves the provision of essential education, health and relief and social services to eligible Palestine refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The ability of the Agency to provide this assistance is entirely dependent on sufficient voluntarily contributed funds being made available to it annually.

23.4 The implementation of the overall strategy will involve the provision of:

(a) Education services: to meet the basic educational needs of Palestine refugees and to enhance their educational opportunities;

(b) Health services: to meet the refugees' basic health needs and improve their overall state of health;

(c) Relief and social services: to provide refugees with assistance in meeting their needs, in maintaining a reasonable standard of existence and in improving their capacity to become more self-reliant, thereby reducing their dependence on such assistance.

23.5 Since 1982, the Agency has provided emergency assistance to Palestine refugees affected by the political turmoil in Lebanon. Similar emergency services have been furnished to refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the beginning of 1988. In addition, the Agency has initiated an expanded programme of assistance in order to improve social and economic conditions for the refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. All three programmes, including extra staff costs, are funded mainly from specially solicited voluntary funds.

23.6 Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles and following consultations with the Palestinian leadership and UNRWA's major donors and host Governments, the Agency introduced its Peace Implementation Programme on 6 October 1993. Peace Implementation Programme projects for the West

Bank and Gaza Strip were developed to achieve the goals set forth by the Secretary-General's task force in its report entitled "Supporting the transition: an immediate response of the United Nations to the interim period in the West Bank and Gaza Strip". Because UNRWA had repeatedly emphasized the importance of including Palestine refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in the benefits of peace, the Peace Implementation Programme was extended to those areas of operation as well.

23.7 Under the Peace Implementation Programme, the Agency aims to improve basic physical and social service infrastructure, particularly in those sectors where UNRWA was already playing a significant role, such as education, health and environmental sanitation, relief and social services, and income-generating activities. UNRWA took care to ensure that projects under the Programme would create employment opportunities for Palestinians. It is estimated that in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over 600 new jobs have already been created as a result of the introduction of the programmes.

23.8 By 30 June 1994, nearly $187 million in proposals had been prepared under the Peace Implementation Programme for projects Agency wide. Approximately $122 million in projects had been identified for the West Bank ($46 million) and Gaza Strip ($76 million). The remainder, $65 million, was for projects in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Donors had committed $30 million towards projects in the West Bank, $48 million for projects in the Gaza Strip, and over $10 million for projects in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

23.9 In accordance with General Assembly resolution 302 (IV), UNESCO and WHO entered into agreements with UNRWA under the terms of which those organizations assumed responsibility for the technical aspects of the Agency's education and health subprogrammes. UNESCO makes available the services of the UNRWA Director of Education, as well as nine other UNESCO specialists, and WHO provides the Director of Health and five other WHO specialists on a non-reimbursable basis. In addition, one staff member is funded by the Government of Switzerland. The Agency currently employs a total of 82 international extrabudgetary staff under all sources and approximately 20,600 locally recruited staff, all of whom are paid out of the voluntary contributions at its disposal for operational activities.

Table 23.1 **Summary of requirements by programme**
(Thousands of United States dollars)

(1) *Regular budget*

Programme	*1992-1993 expenditures*	*1994-1995 appropriations*	*Resource growth* Amount	Percentage	*Total before recosting*	*Recosting*	*1996-1997 estimates*
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	20 978.4	21 350.3	—	—	21 350.3	2 261.4	23 611.7
Total	**20 978.4**	**21 350.3**	**—**	**—**	**21 350.3**	**2 261.4**	**23 611.7**

(2) *Extrabudgetary resources*

	1992-1993 expenditures	*1994-1995 estimates*	*Source of funds*	*1996-1997 estimates*
			(a) Services in support of:	
			(i) United Nations organizations	
			(ii) Extrabudgetary activities	
			(b) Substantive activities	
	653 697.0	793 704.0	(c) Operational projects UNRWA	894 987.0
Total	**653 697.0**	**793 704.0**		**894 987.0**
Total (1) and (2)	**674 675.4**	**815 054.3**		**918 598.7**

Table 23.2 **Summary by object of expenditure**
(Thousands of United States dollars)

(1) *Regular budget*

Object of expenditure	*1992-1993 expenditures*	*1994-1995 appropriations*	*Resource growth*		*Total before recosting*	*Recosting*	*1996-1997 estimates*
			Amount	*Percentage*			
Posts	20 972.1	21 328.9	—	—	21 328.9	2 260.4	23 589.3
Other staff costs	6.3	21.4	—	—	21.4	1.0	22.4
Total	**20 978.4**	**21 350.3**	**—**	**—**	**21 350.3**	**2 261.4**	**23 611.7**

(2) *Extrabudgetary resources*

1992-1993 expenditures	*1994-1995 estimates*	*Object of expenditure*	*1996-1997 estimates*
358 142.0	424 045.0	Posts	472 017.0
7 980.0	8 666.0	Other staff costs	9 637.0
4 558.0	7 082.0	Consultants and experts	5 574.0
5 400.0	4 878.0	Travel	5 306.0
18 564.0	25 230.0	Contractual services	31 172.0
22 253.0	32 995.0	General operating expenses	37 509.0
127 079.0	111 865.0	Supplies and materials	110 168.0
13 240.0	26 306.0	Furniture and equipment	32 028.0
44 168.0	105 133.0	Improvements to premises	144 349.0
52 313.0	47 504.0	Other expenditure	47 227.0
653 697.0	**793 704.0**		**894 987.0**
674 675.4	**815 054.3**		**918 598.7**

Table 23.3 **Post requirements**

Organizational unit: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

	Established posts		*Temporary posts*					
	Regular budget		*Regular budget*		*Extrabudgetary resources*		*Total*	
	1994-1995	*1996-1997*	*1994-1995*	*1996-1997*	*1994-1995*	*1996-1997*	*1994-1995*	*1996-1997*
Professional category and above								
USG	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
ASG	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1
D-2	1	1	—	—	1	1	2	2
D-1	10	10	—	—	1	1	11	11
P-5	16	16	—	—	10	10	26	26
P-4/3	51	51	—	—	62	62	113	113
P-2/1	2	2	—	—	8	8	10	10
Total	**82**	**82**	**—**	**—**	**82[a]**	**82**	**164**	**164**
General Service category								
Other levels	10	10	—	—	—	—	10	10
Total	**10**	**10**	**—**	**—**	**—**	**—**	**10**	**10**
Grand total	**92**	**92**	**—**	**—**	**82**	**82**	**174**	**174**

[a] In addition there are 16 staff members on loan from UNESCO (10) and WHO (6) and one staff member funded by the Government of Switzerland, and UNRWA employs approximately 20,600 locally recruited staff.

Programme of work

23.10 The activities of UNRWA correspond to subprogramme 6 of programme 36, International protection of and assistance to refugees, of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as revised (A/47/6/Rev.1). In view of the nature of the Agency's programme, no designation of priority was made among the six subprogrammes.

Activities

1. Education

23.11 The education services will continue to provide general, higher, teacher and vocational/technical education for Palestine refugee children in accordance with their needs, identity and cultural heritage, and consistent with UNESCO standards. The Agency will continue its efforts to improve the quality of teaching, training and staff development, and to rely on UNESCO for technical expertise and support. Major planned actions are directed at meeting the natural growth in the school population by providing the necessary school facilities and teaching staff, and improving the quality of teaching, training, physical and manpower facilities as well as the level of staff competence. To that end, UNRWA inaugurated an educational science faculty in both Jordan and the West Bank in September 1993. The educational science faculty offers a four-year programme at university degree level for new teachers and will upgrade to university degree level the qualifications of the current 4,800 Agency teachers in possession of only a two-year teacher training certificate.

(a) *General education.* The Agency currently provides elementary and preparatory-level education to some 398,800 eligible refugee children. That figure is expected to grow by 2.5 per cent per annum to about 429,500 children by the end of the biennium. Those pupils attended 641 UNRWA schools,

an increase of about 6,000 pupils over the preceding school year as a result of natural growth in the Palestine refugee community;

(b) *Vocational and professional training*. The Agency currently provides 4,536 vocational, technical and teacher training places in eight training centres following the introduction of new courses. It has been decided to upgrade the teacher training programme in Jordan and the West Bank to four-year faculties of educational science awarding first university degrees to an annual intake of 75 trainees in Jordan and 145 trainees in the West Bank as a result of the new stipulation by the host Governments that teachers in the elementary and preparatory cycles should have a first university degree. Those faculties will also provide in-service teacher training to the Agency's teachers in Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza to the four-year college level. The number of places at the eight training centres is accordingly expected to grow from 4,800 currently to about 6,000 by the end of the biennium, if sufficient special contributions are forthcoming for the establishment of the planned new vocational and technical education courses. The Agency is currently providing 826 university scholarships to eligible refugee children; no change is anticipated in that output during the biennium if external funding continues to be received for the purpose. The Agency also provides in-service teacher training to about 765 teachers and other education staff through its Institute of Education at the UNRWA headquarters branch at Amman and the Education Development Centres in the UNRWA fields (Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and Gaza).

2. Health services

23.12 Soon after the peace process began in 1991, UNRWA realized that a major challenge facing a future Palestinian health authority in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would be to create a coherent, unified and affordable programme of health care, drawing together radically different services of the type and quality provided at the time by the Civil Administration, UNRWA, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. In order to contribute to the quality of the health infrastructure, the Agency intensified its commitment to maintain, upgrade and expand its primary health care facilities; construct and equip a 232-bed general hospital in Gaza; establish a college of nursing to operate in conjunction with the hospital; and establish a special programme for comprehensive planning and project implementation for sustainable development in the environmental health sector in the Gaza Strip. Concurrently, the Agency engaged in efforts to facilitate a process of harmonization of its services with other health care providers, assisted in the coordination of practical aspects of health policy and the enhancement of technical cooperation with the emerging Palestinian health structures in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including the Palestine Council of Health, the Palestine Environmental Protection Authority, the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, local municipalities and, as of June 1994, the health programme of the Palestinian Authority.

(a) *Medical care services*. UNRWA medical care services continued to include both preventive and curative medical care. Medical care at the primary level was complemented by secondary services, such as hospitalization and other referral and support services. The Agency is currently providing preventive and curative medical services to some 3.0 million eligible refugees. Those services cover the control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health care and family planning services, school health services, health education, out-patient treatment at Agency health centres, modest community mental health programmes and the subsidizing of in-patient treatment at non-governmental and private hospitals. It is expected that the number of refugees eligible for treatment will grow by 3 per cent per annum to about 3.17 million by the end of the biennium and that the number of patient visits to UNRWA health centres will increase from 4.2 million per annum currently to 4.5 million at the end of the biennium;

(b) *Nutrition and supplementary feeding services*. The programme incorporated into the Agency's health protection programme provides nutritional support to vulnerable groups, namely, infants and pre-school children, pregnant and nursing women and tuberculosis patients. The Agency is currently providing services to an average of 197,000 recipients and the number is expected to increase to over 198,000 by the end of the biennium;

(c) *Environmental health services*. Basic environmental health services are currently being provided to approximately 1.0 million registered refugees living in camps. The number of registered camp

dwellers is expected to grow by 3.5 per cent per annum to 1.07 million by the end of the biennium. The Agency endeavours to raise external funds and implement major developmental projects for improving water, sewerage and solid waste management in refugee camps of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Lebanon, which, subject to availability of funds, will be implemented in coordination with concerned authorities and local municipalities.

3. Relief and social services

23.13 The relief and social services will continue to support the most disadvantaged of the Palestine refugees to facilitate their social and economic self-reliance and development. This will be achieved through short-term direct relief for the destitute and longer-term developmental social welfare programmes. The latter include poverty alleviation and income-generating schemes (skill training and enterprise support) targeted especially at women, unemployed youth, disabled persons and others who would otherwise have difficulty in securing access to work and an income. A key strategy in the biennium 1996-1997 will be the strengthening of the community's own mechanisms for tackling those issues, through technical and financial support, in particular to community-based projects for women and the rehabilitation and integration of disabled persons. Professional training of staff in developmental social welfare concepts and techniques will be an essential complement, taking further the shift in their role from provider to facilitator begun in previous bienniums.

(a) *Relief services.* Direct relief to destitute refugees is provided in the form of food rations (flour, rice, sugar, cooking oil and protein supplements), blankets, clothing for children, cash assistance at times of crisis and shelter rehabilitation. The Agency is presently assisting 177,200 needy persons, whose number is expected to grow by an average of 3.5 per cent per annum to some 196,000 by the end of the biennium 1996-1997.

(b) *Social services.* All registered refugees are in principle eligible to benefit from the social service programmes for which they feel a need. In practice, the target group is about 10 per cent of the total registered population, which itself now stands at 3 million and is expected to grow by 3.5 per cent per annum to almost 3.32 million by the end of the biennium. Technical and financial support is given, *inter alia*, to skill training and support for income-generating enterprises (via grants and soft loans); rehabilitation of disabled persons; community development projects; women's literacy, legal awareness and other developmental programmes; and youth activities and leadership training. Social counselling is also given individually and in groups where necessary, as an additional support to clients of those programmes.

Resource requirements (at current rates)

Posts

23.14 The estimated requirements of $21,328,900 relate to the continuation of 82 staff in the Professional category and above and 10 General Service posts from the current biennium.

Other staff costs

23.15 Estimated requirements of $21,400, at the maintenance base level, would provide for general temporary assistance for secretariat services rendered to UNRWA officials while in New York attending the General Assembly and on other official business.